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COORDINATION QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF THE COORDINATION BODIES

Annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1994

SUMMARY

The present report covers the work carried out by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its subsidiary bodies in 1994, and endeavours to highlight policy issues requiring attention by Governments and by concerned intergovernmental bodies.

During the year, ACC continued to focus on policy issues relating to the division of labour within the United Nations system and to resource flows for development. It also paid particular attention to the challenge of African economic recovery and development, which was the focus of deliberations both at its second regular session and at the twenty-eighth series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and ACC.

As part of the effort to improve coherence and coordination within the system, considerable attention was devoted at the inter-agency level to system-wide preparations for major international conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), and for the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. ACC also continued to monitor the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the substantive implementation of Agenda 21, and examined the implications of the

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World Conference on Human Rights for the work of the United Nations system. A succinct summary of the outcome of the ACC discussions in all these areas is provided in the present report.

The progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations system is also reviewed, as are the developments in the provision of assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations. As in the past, the last two sections of the report cover the work of ACC on financial, administrative and personnel questions during the period and the main elements of the ACC programme in 1995.

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FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The current year, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, should be the occasion for a serious assessment of progress achieved and of the challenges facing the United Nations in the future.

I am convinced that the future of the Organization cannot be addressed in isolation from that of the wider United Nations system and the principles of cooperation and international solidarity which the system represents. The United Nations system is not just a form of international organization. Its diverse components constitute together a great and unique experiment in international cooperation which must be safeguarded; at the same time, priorities and methods of work must be continuously adapted to changing requirements.

I am equally convinced that an important factor affecting the common future of the United Nations system will be the extent to which it is able to develop - and is perceived as having achieved - a true unity of purpose and action, pursuing common objectives and priorities that have a visible impact on the policies of nations and the welfare of peoples.

Hence the importance of an effective system of inter-agency cooperation and coordination, geared to identifying the main policy issues facing the international community and to promoting and organizing on a continuing basis joint initiatives and responses around common priority objectives. These are the goals that have guided the reform of the ACC machinery initiated three years ago. Further advances in this direction are more important than ever, at a time of unprecedented demands on the system, but also of scarce resources and of challenges to multilateralism.

Progress towards a more coherent United Nations system also requires mutual confidence and a continuing dialogue between the secretariats of the system and the central intergovernmental bodies charged with setting overall policies for inter-agency coordination. The high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council provides an excellent opportunity for such interactions at the most senior level, which should be fully exploited. The experience at the twenty-eighth series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC has also been positive in this regard, having allowed for expert discussions and an encouraging convergence of views on programme topics of current interest and relevance.

Ultimately, the presence of coherent policy frameworks to which the membership is fully committed and which can guide decision-making by individual governing bodies as well as the work of ACC, is an essential prerequisite for qualitative improvements in inter-agency cooperation and coordination. The intergovernmental discussions which have been initiated on an Agenda for Development are highly relevant in this regard. Alongside these discussions, the continuum of conferences during 1994 and 1995, encompassing the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, can make a crucial contribution to those ends.

I am confident that ACC will continue to play its part in promoting a renewed consensus on these interrelated dimensions of development and, drawing on such a consensus, in leading an effective response by the secretariats of the system.

INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

1. The present report covers the work of ACC and its subsidiary machinery in 1994.

2. In response to a request by CPC, the report endeavours to highlight policy issues which appear to call for special attention by the concerned intergovernmental bodies.

3. Section I deals with the continuing consideration by ACC of policy issues concerning the division of labour within the system and related issues of resource flows for development. In section II, policies and priorities relating to African economic recovery and development are reviewed, based on the consideration of the subject by ACC itself and at the twenty-eighth series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC. Section III reviews the system-wide preparations for major conferences: the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), as well as the preparations for the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations; it also discusses the follow-up to UNCED and the World Conference on Human Rights. Section IV deals with the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations system. Assistance provided by the United Nations system to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations is covered in section V. Section VI deals with financial, administrative and personnel questions and section VII outlines briefly the elements of ACC's work in 1995.

B. Issues for consideration by intergovernmental bodies

4. At its thirty-fourth session, in 1994, CPC noted that the Economic and Social Council was carrying out its coordination functions in the context of its high-level and coordination segments; considered that it could assist in the fulfilment of the Council's role by focusing its attention on programming and prioritization of issues; and requested that annual overview reports of ACC be directed towards providing the necessary information to assist CPC in fulfilling that function (A/49/16 (Part I), para. 69).

5. As ACC pursues its efforts to enhance the coherence of the activities of the secretariats of the United Nations system and presents the results to the relevant intergovernmental bodies, it will endeavour to highlight issues that need to be addressed by Governments, with emphasis on issues of policy coordination coming within the purview of the central intergovernmental bodies.

6. With regard to the division of labour within the system and cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, the conclusions so far drawn by ACC, as outlined in the present as well as in previous reports, have contributed to an

improved understanding of orientations and policies to be pursued, and of the outstanding problems to be addressed. As reiterated in the present report, an improved sharing of responsibilities and strengthened collaboration within the system require a clear articulation of common goals and a shared understanding of the problems to be tackled and the approaches to be followed. This implies a continuous and effective flow of information and exchange of views not only among the secretariats concerned but also among the relevant intergovernmental bodies. Indeed, a systematic, pragmatic and result-oriented dialogue among all the partners concerned is a necessary condition for a decentralized structure, such as that of the United Nations system, to achieve a qualitative strengthening of arrangements for cooperation across the wide range of issues addressed by it. CPC and the Economic and Social Council have a vital role in this regard.

7. ACC also concluded that access to an adequate level of resources constituted one of the primary problems facing the United Nations system. ACC emphasized that ensuring the access of specialized agencies to increased levels of resources was particularly important in order to maintain the required technical capacity of the system in support of development. The need to preserve the unique capacities of the smaller technical agencies was particularly stressed.

8. As regards African economic recovery and development, ACC, in identifying the priority issues that needed to be addressed at the national and international levels and the policy directions guiding the United Nations system, recognized that the scale of current efforts on the part of the system, and the international community in general, in no way matched the scale of the problems being faced in Africa and that a much higher level of commitment and resources at both the national and international levels would be required to overcome the African crisis. ACC thus called for urgent measures to increase official development assistance (ODA) flows to African countries, a reduction in the burden of external debt, as well as international support for African diversification and for the efforts of African countries to fully benefit from the opportunities created by the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

9. One of the main issues, related to system-wide coordination, that has emerged from the work of ACC over the past year is how to maximize synergies and avoid duplication in the preparations for, and follow-up to, major international conferences organized by the United Nations. Following UNCED, the World Conference on Human Rights and the International Conference on Population and Development, all of which have had or will have far-reaching implications for the work of the entire United Nations system, inter-agency preparations were under way in 1994 for the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). As ACC pursues its effort to mobilize the contribution of the system in support of these conferences, the question increasingly arises as to how interlinkages among them can best be addressed. Each of these conferences entails or is likely to entail follow-up activities at the national, regional and international levels, including national reporting and reporting by agencies on several common or cross-cutting issues.

10. In order to reduce the burden of reporting but, more important, with a view to enhancing the coherence and impact of national and international actions, it appears increasingly necessary to articulate a common framework for action that takes into account relationships and linkages among the issues covered by these conferences and the recommendations emanating from them. While ACC has initiated work to this end, the development of such a framework will require the full attention of the intergovernmental bodies that have the responsibility for the follow-up to these conferences and should be a central concern of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. A closely related question is the relationship of these conferences to the elaboration of an Agenda for Development.

11. At a broader level, the need for enhanced inter-agency coherence in the whole area of peace-building, bearing in mind the essential role of economic and social development in conflict resolution and the maintenance of peace, has been stressed by the Secretary-General in the document entitled "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: position paper of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations" (A/50/60-S/1995/1). The Secretary-General states in that report:

> "I shall maintain my efforts in the Administrative Committee on Coordination and in my bilateral relations with the executive heads of the various funds, programmes, offices and agencies to achieve better coordination within the United Nations system in the context of peace and security. Governments of Member States can support these efforts. Many of the problems of coordination arise from the mandates decreed for the agencies by discrete intergovernmental bodies. As such, they defy the capacity for inter-Secretariat coordination. I accordingly recommend that Governments instruct their representatives in the various intergovernmental bodies to ensure that proper coordination is recognized to be an essential condition for the Organization's success and that it is not made hostage to inter-institutional rivalry and competition" (para. 96).

12. The issue of the security and safety of United Nations staff and associated personnel serving in dangerous locations, in connection with the increasing operations of the United Nations system world wide, also requires close attention by the intergovernmental bodies concerned. At its second regular session of 1994, ACC adopted a statement on the subject, which was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

I. POLICY ISSUES RELATING TO THE DIVISION OF LABOUR WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES

13. During 1994, ACC continued its efforts to enhance the coherence and complementarity of actions by the organizations of the United Nations system in the context of its consideration of policy issues relating to the division of labour within the system and access to resources. This was a prominent item on the agenda of both the first and second regular sessions of 1994 of ACC.

14. ACC recognized that the issue of the division of labour within the system, understood in the sense of a more effective sharing of responsibilities and of enhanced coordination and complementarities, was of crucial importance and was indeed one of its raisons d'être. The issue had acquired particular relevance in the present context of rapid globalization of the world economy and the growing scarcity of resources, which made it all the more important for each organization to focus clearly on the core areas of its comparative strength and to collaborate with others to achieve greater complementarity in addressing cross-sectoral issues.

15. Common understandings on policy orientations and a clear articulation of common goals should form the basis for the sharing of responsibilities among organizations. Such common approaches should be devised and pursued by groups of concerned organizations around clusters of closely related issues in order to develop cooperative actions at the global, regional, subregional and country levels. Successful collaborative arrangements in such areas as primary health care, basic education, climate and chemicals should be emulated in other fields. The experience and lessons gained in developing a decentralized process of coordination for the follow-up to UNCED, through the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), should also be drawn upon in formulating system-wide responses to such other major initiatives as the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). Many issues calling for collaborative actions at the regional and subregional levels should be pursued, taking into account the role of the regional commissions.

16. ACC emphasized that economic, social and environmental aspects of development should be pursued simultaneously and in an integrated manner. This would in turn provide a framework for improving collaboration between the Bretton Woods institutions and the other organizations of the system. ACC noted that while issues relating to economic reforms and growth were being pursued with vigour and financial support, mainly from the Bretton Woods institutions, the pursuit of the social and environmental dimensions of development, including the protection of human rights, was lagging, owing to a lack of adequate resources and a proper appreciation of the linkages among the various dimensions of development. There was, therefore, a need to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in promoting social progress as an integral part of development and to enhance the coherence of policies and organizational structures at the national and international levels. In that respect, ACC again stressed the importance of the World Summit for Social Development, which should complement UNCED. Within the context of that overall framework, ways and means should be devised for greater use by the Bretton Woods institutions, in their technical cooperation activities, of the expertise available in the other specialized agencies.

17. In the view of ACC, access to adequate levels of resources continued to represent one of the primary problems facing the United Nations system. It was recognized that the capacity of the system for resource mobilization was affected by a variety of considerations and was influenced by the perception of the efficiency of the organizations of the system and the cost-effectiveness of their activities. The comparative advantages of the system inherent in its

universality, neutrality, multilateralism and internationally agreed objectives should therefore be reinforced by the system demonstrating its ability to take collaborative actions to enhance the efficacy of its activities. ACC noted that access to increased levels of resources was essential in order to maintain and strengthen the technical capacities of the specialized agencies in their respective areas of competence. In the same context, the special situation being faced by the smaller technical agencies and the need for their active involvement in the formulation of country strategies were highlighted. The need for the funding organizations and financial institutions to give greater attention to the regional and subregional dimensions of development, bearing in mind that many of the problems dealt with by those technical agencies were cross-boundary, was stressed.

18. The need for closer collaboration within the system to enhance linkages between emergency and short-term needs and long-term development goals was also widely stressed. It was pointed out that these two sets of activities should be considered a continuum for funding purposes.

19. ACC also called for the building-up of stronger partnerships between organizations of the system and other actors engaged in development, including regional development banks, regional and subregional organizations, bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in order to improve the quality and impact of activities and expand their constituencies and public support.

20. In pursuing its consideration of those issues at its second regular session of 1994, ACC devoted particular attention to cooperative arrangements between the Bretton Woods institutions, on the one hand, and United Nations funds and programmes and other specialized agencies, including the smaller technical agencies, on the other.

21. ACC reiterated the fact that the resident coordinator system had a crucial leading role to play, in support of recipient Governments, in ensuring effective coordination among all development actors, including agencies and institutions that did not have field representation. It concluded that efforts to promote greater complementarity between the country strategy notes and the policy framework papers should be furthered in that context.

22. ACC considered that coordination efforts were best concentrated on (a) specific priority issues, situations and geographical regions and (b) the preparations for and follow-up to global conferences. Cooperative and complementary actions, especially at the regional and subregional levels, should be pursued, drawing on the specific roles and mandates of the various organizations and benefiting from the variety of approaches represented in the United Nations system.

23. ACC particularly stressed the need for close inter-agency cooperation in building national capacity on the basis of priorities established by Governments. Concerted, system-wide efforts at capacity-building were especially important in ensuring an effective transition from relief and rehabilitation to development. In the same context, emphasis was placed on infrastructure development and on the importance of the Bretton Woods

institutions, as well as the funds and operational programmes of the United Nations, making effective use of the expertise available in the smaller technical agencies and other relevant United Nations entities.

24. A number of specific suggestions and proposals were formulated, concerning both questions of interorganization cooperation and the identification of substantive development issues requiring special attention at the inter-agency level, which are now guiding the development of arrangements for follow-up action and were taken into account in the elaboration of conclusions and recommendations related to the Agenda for Development, submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session (see A/49/665).

II. AFRICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

A. Consideration by ACC

25. ACC, in its discussion on African economic recovery and development, highlighted the following points:

(a) The continuing crisis of development in Africa was one of the greatest challenges facing the United Nations system and the entire international community. Confidence in the future of Africa should be restored and strengthened;

(b) The emergence of South Africa as an independent and multiracial country, growing regional and subregional cooperation and the positive economic performance of a number of African countries were encouraging developments. But current overall negative trends, if they were to be reversed, called for a momentous response from African countries and concerted support on a massive scale from the international community;

(c) The political and humanitarian problems in Africa that attracted so much public attention were a manifestation of a more deep-rooted and structural crisis that required concerted action by all partners in order to address its causes at the most fundamental level. Preventive action was not only a moral duty but also the most effective way of averting future crises, which caused human suffering, led to displaced populations and destroyed the basis for development. In situations of actual crisis, humanitarian assistance should be designed to ensure an effective continuum from relief to rehabilitation and longer-term development;

(d) A broad-based and stable political framework, security and stability together provided the foundation for long-term sustainable development. To that end, more creative and broader support should be provided for the efforts of African countries to further good governance and democracy, establish the rule of law and respect for human rights, and build sound and equitable systems for civil service and the administration of justice;

(e) A sound and stable macroeconomic policy framework that provided support for growth and employment was equally critical to success. Adjustment and development should proceed together because neither can succeed alone;

(f) In order to achieve essential food security, overcome the structural constraints inherent in current agricultural practices and better exploit existing potential, a new green revolution should be fostered to bring about both a massive improvement in water resources management and a major increase in the irrigation of arable land and in the application of scientific techniques to agricultural production;

(g) In the same context, environmental degradation and its negative implications for long-term development should be addressed by improving and enhancing capacities for the environmentally sound management of the natural resource base;

(h) Building a modern system of transport and communications, which was equally critical to overcoming logistical obstacles to development, called for regional approaches and long-term investments;

(i) Industrialization, which was essential for diversifying the production base and generating employment opportunities, especially for a rapidly growing urban population, required adopting measures to create an environment conducive to private investment, both domestic and foreign;

(j) The development of human resources and management capacity was central to success in all areas of action. It required a focus on adequate nutrition; a comprehensive health policy and strategy, including the control of widespread diseases; education for all and the formation of middle-level and higher-level skills and institutional capacity; and the creation of employment opportunities. The tide of rapid population growth should be stemmed by development strategies and family planning approaches that aimed at raising the status of women in society.

26. ACC stressed that the United Nations system should remain fully engaged in Africa. The organizations of the system, individually and collectively, had placed the highest priority on African development.

27. Many of the recent successes in Africa were mentioned, including eradicating apartheid in South Africa; averting famine in southern Africa; controlling diseases; meeting the emergency and humanitarian needs of countries in crisis; promoting regional initiatives and agreements; and extending policy advice and operational activities in many parts of the continent. The United Nations system should build on that experience by carefully analysing the elements of success and by constructing collaborative approaches around specific goals and objectives.

28. At the country level, it was also emphasized that the resident coordinator system provided an instrument for enhancing coordination around specific priority issues and goals. The policy framework papers and the structural adjustment programmes adopted by a large number of African countries provided an opportunity to further cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and

other organizations and bodies of the system - for example, in the context of developing the country strategy notes. Similarly, the strategies for poverty eradication being pursued by many organizations should provide a basis for stronger cooperation at the country level.

29. ACC recognized, however, that the scale of current efforts on the part of either the United Nations system or the international community in general, in no way matched the scale of the problems being faced in Africa. A much higher level of commitment and resources at both the national and international levels would be required to overcome the African crisis.

30. ACC was deeply concerned at the decline in ODA and called for urgent measures to increase ODA flows to African countries. A reduction in the burden of external debt of the African countries and support for better debt management, together with a greater mobilization of resources, should enable African countries to move forward from the phase of adjustment to development. International assistance was also needed to enable African countries to benefit fully from the trade opportunities created by the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and to minimize any short-term negative effects. Similarly, African efforts at diversification should be fully supported by the international community, particularly in terms of providing increased market access. The Committee stressed that the United Nations system should assist in mobilizing international support for such measures.

31. With regard to follow-up action, as suggested by the Secretary-General, ACC decided to set up, at its first regular session of 1995, a senior-level steering committee of ACC and a number of ad hoc groups in order to identify during the course of 1995, major inter-agency initiatives to be taken in support of Africa; develop country-level cooperation around specific issues and goals; build scenarios for the future; and define the policy options required for galvanizing international support for African economic recovery and development. The outcome of these initiatives will be covered in ACC's annual overview report for 1995.

B. Results of the twenty-eighth series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC

32. The twenty-eighth series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC, which was devoted to the continuing crisis of development in Africa, presented an opportunity for a dialogue between government representatives and agency secretariats on forging a coordinated and effective response to the crisis in the region.

33. The Joint Meetings had a full debate on the critical situation of Africa. In their statements, members of CPC addressed a number of policy issues relating to African economic recovery and development and raised questions about the critical issues of resource mobilization and allocation, inter-agency coordination, particularly at the country and regional levels, and the need to build partnerships between the regional organizations and the United Nations system, as well as between the Bretton Woods institutions and other organizations of the system.

34. Representatives of the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in their statements, addressed many of the issues raised by members of CPC and briefed the Joint Meetings on the policies and strategies being pursued by their organizations in support of African development in their respective fields of competence and on the steps being taken by them to enhance inter-agency coordination and build partnerships with multilateral and bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other development actors in support of African development.

35. The following broad conclusions were derived from the discussion:

(a) The Joint Meetings welcomed the conclusions and recommendations relating to the revised System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, adopted by CPC at its thirty-fourth session (E/1994/123, para. 88), and the conclusions of ACC, adopted at its second regular session of 1994 (E/1994/123, para. 90);

(b) The Joint Meetings called upon the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to take all steps necessary for the effective implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action, in close cooperation with African Governments and the regional organizations concerned, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of CPC and ACC;

(c) The Joint Meetings shared the deep concern expressed by ACC at the decline of ODA and called for urgent measures to increase ODA flows to Africa. It was generally agreed that a much higher level of commitment and resources, at both the national and international levels, would be required to overcome the African crisis. It was further emphasized that an adequate level of resources should be allocated for the effective implementation of the revised System-wide Plan of Action by the organizations of the United Nations system;

(d) It was recognized that a substantial reduction in the burden of external debt was essential to enable the African countries to restore sustained growth and development. International assistance was also needed to enable African countries to benefit fully from the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and to minimize their short-term negative effects;

(e) The importance of diversification was stressed, as was the need for international support for the efforts of African countries to diversify their economies, including through greater market access; the need for a diversification facility was stressed;

(f) It was considered that good governance, including accountability and transparency, a sound and stable macroeconomic policy framework, consistent and effective policies for reform and structural adjustment, taking into account the social dimension, creation of favourable conditions for market-oriented development and foreign direct investment were equally critical to success;

(g) The need to achieve essential food security and develop the food and agricultural sector was emphasized. It was essential to overcome structural constraints inherent in current agricultural practices, to improve water

resources management, to increase the irrigation of arable land and to apply scientific techniques to agricultural production;

(h) It was noted that industrialization, which was essential for diversifying the production base and generating employment opportunities, especially for a rapidly growing urban population, required the adoption of measures to create an environment conducive to private investment;

(i) The importance of reversing environmental degradation and addressing its negative implications for long-term development was stressed. A call was made for improving and enhancing national capacities for the environmentally sound management of the natural resource base;

(j) It was noted that building human settlements, and a modern system of transport and communications, which were equally critical to overcoming logistical obstacles to development, called for regional approaches and long-term investments;

(k) The development of human resources and capacity-building was considered central to success in all areas of action. It required a focus on adequate nutrition; a comprehensive health policy and strategy, including the control of widespread diseases; education for all and the building of middle-level and higher-level skills and institutional capacity; and the creation of employment opportunities. The tide of rapid population growth had to be stemmed by development strategies and family planning approaches that aimed at raising the status of women in society;

(l) A unanimous call was made for enhanced and effective coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system, particularly at the field level, to ensure efficient delivery and optimum impact of programmes and projects. A call was made to fully utilize such instruments of coordination as the resident coordinator system, the country strategy notes, the programme approach, national execution and field committees. It was suggested that cooperation and partnership with regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) should be strengthened; in this context, the coordinating role of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) at the regional level was stressed. It was suggested that regular meetings of resident coordinators with ECA and OAU could enhance field-level coordination;

(m) The Joint Meetings emphasized the need to improve the image and highlight the successes that had been achieved in Africa.

III. SYSTEM-WIDE PREPARATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP TO CONFERENCES AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

36. An important part of inter-agency work during the year related to initiatives to mobilize the United Nations system in support of the preparations for major international conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). Indeed, a powerful international development agenda is emerging

on an ongoing basis through the work of a continuum of United Nations conferences and summits. Effective and realistic mechanisms should be made available to implement goals established at these conferences.

37. In this connection, a common framework should be developed to follow up major United Nations conferences, past and future. Goals and targets in the economic and social development field endorsed by past international conferences and summits should be synthesized, costed, prioritized and placed in a reasonable time perspective for implementation.

A. International Conference on Population and Development

38. Inter-agency preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development were undertaken through an Ad Hoc Inter-agency Task Force comprising focal points especially designated by all organizations of the United Nations system concerned.

39. The Task Force was instrumental in keeping United Nations agencies, organizations and programmes abreast of preparations for the Conference and ensuring that the formulation of the draft Programme of Action of the Conference benefited fully from the contributions of the system and drew on analytical inputs and policy assessments of all the United Nations organizations concerned. This will, in turn, facilitate a concerted effort by the system to pursue effective implementation of the Programme of Action. Inter-agency initiatives under way to this end, including the outcome of ACC's consideration of the matter at its first regular session of 1995, will be covered in ACC's annual overview report for 1995.

B. World Summit for Social Development

40. In resolution 47/92, the General Assembly decided to convene a World Summit for Social Development and, inter alia, requested "the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental organizations, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to contribute fully to the preparations for the Summit".

41. The Preparatory Committee for the Summit, at its first session, in January/February 1994, stressed the integrated nature of development and the critical role that various institutions, including those having financial responsibilities, should play within their sphere of competence for the successful preparation and follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development.

42. During the preparatory process, in addition to ACC's own deliberations on the issues before the Summit, several ad hoc inter-agency meetings on the Summit were held in 1993 and 1994. Agencies, programmes and organizations of the system submitted reports and contributions to the three sessions of the

Preparatory Committee, held in 1994 and 1995. The Secretariat also held informal briefings for agencies during sessions of the Preparatory Committee.

43. Throughout the process, United Nations organizations and agencies have been active in organizing meetings, workshops, seminars and panel discussions on subjects related to the Summit. They have also provided inputs to the Secretariat in the preparation of the draft Programme of Action for the Summit. The Summit is expected to have major implications for the policies and activities of practically all the organizations of the system.

C. Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace

44. For the past two years, promoting the effective participation of the United Nations system as a whole in the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women at the national, regional and international levels has been the main focus of the work of the Ad hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Women. In March 1994, the Meeting prepared a joint statement addressed to the Commission on the Status of Women concerning the Platform for Action to be adopted at the Conference.

45. In addition, informal inter-agency consultations have been convened by the Secretary-General of the Conference at frequent intervals to promote coordination of activities, share information and provide advice and inputs to the Conference secretariat regarding Conference preparations. At the request of the Conference secretariat, many United Nations agencies and organizations, in addition to commenting on drafts of the Platform for Action, have contributed extensively to the preparation of the documentation for the Fourth World Conference on Women, including Women in a Changing Economy: 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the updated edition of The World's Women.

46. United Nations agencies and organizations are also actively supporting preparatory activities at the national level, and played an active role in support of the five regional preparatory conferences convened under the auspices of the regional commissions of the United Nations.

D. United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

47. Many United Nations agencies and organizations are actively supporting and cooperating with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) in the substantive preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be held at Istanbul in June 1996. Several of these organizations will sponsor or conduct specific activities for the Conference. Notable among such initiatives are a colloquium on women and children, to be conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund, together with the United Nations Development Fund for Women; an exhibition on good urban environment management practices, to be organized by the United Nations Population Fund; a symposium on alternative sewerage systems for large cities, to be sponsored by

the World Health Organization; and a symposium on cities in the twenty-first century: tolerance, citizenship and social integration, to be organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in cooperation with UNCHS. UNESCO will also report to the Conference on six to eight significant examples of inner city revitalization. At the national level, United Nations resident coordinators are actively participating in the preparatory activities for the Conference and are assisting in promoting South-South cooperation on urban management at the regional and global levels. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization will organize a colloquium on technological changes of industrial production and their effects on location. The United Nations University, through the World Institute for Development Economics Research, will organize a seminar on human settlements in the changing global political and economic processes and the World Bank will organize a colloquium on sustainability in urban development. Focal points, appointed in all of the organizations concerned, maintain close contact with UNCHS on these and other related issues.

E. Preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

48. During 1994, ACC continued to devote attention to system-wide preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. ACC members reiterated their commitment to cooperating actively with the United Nations in order to ensure that the observance of the anniversary served to enhance the image of, and generate support for, the United Nations system, and provided an opportunity to highlight its achievements and reflect on its future and the challenges before it.

49. ACC considered it important that the observance of the anniversary focus on substantive activities aimed at educating the public, building a wider constituency for the system and demonstrating its continued relevance for the future. To those ends, it should involve the widest possible participation at the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental levels, including the academic community. Particular importance was attached to supporting, through the resident coordinators and with the participation of all interested agencies, activities to be undertaken by national committees at the country level.

F. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

50. Questions related to the follow-up to UNCED and the work of IACSD continued to be a standing item on the agenda of ACC in 1994.

51. IACSD focused on the allocation and sharing of responsibilities for the implementation of Agenda 21 by the United Nations system and on the monitoring of new and additional financial requirements of the organizations of the United Nations system for the implementation of the outcome of UNCED. IACSD also reviewed the results of the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and agreed on the actions required to further support the Commission's work. In that context, IACSD was concerned about promoting a more

balanced approach in relation to several aspects of the follow-up to UNCED, including:

(a) The need to achieve a better balance between environmental and development aspects of the follow-up to UNCED, and to promote, to that end, the more active involvement of national development and financial policy makers in the work of the Commission;

(b) The need to give greater attention, alongside global and transnational issues, to issues related to urgent regional and national aspects of sustainability;

(c) The need to establish a closer relationship between new proposals concerning sectoral programmes and the means necessary to implement them - for example, in relation to such cross-sectoral issues as finance and technology.

52. Pursuant to a decision adopted by ACC at its first regular session of 1994, IACSD launched an overall review of its functioning, leading to a full assessment of the response of the United Nations system to Agenda 21 in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly in 1997.

53. IACSD also considered matters related to the functioning of its Subcommittees on Water Resources and on Oceans and Coastal Areas and addressed, in a preliminary way, pending the outcome of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the implications for the system of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

54. Complementing the work of IACSD, joint initiatives aimed at furthering the implementation of Agenda 21 and of specific recommendations of the Commission continued to be developed within the United Nations system. The most recent of such initiatives include the elaboration of a joint United Nations programme for capacity-building related to transfer of environmentally sound technologies; activities, organized jointly by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in the area of trade, environment and sustainable development; preparations for a comprehensive assessment of water resources; further work on the elaboration of sustainable development indicators; and new initiatives in the areas of human settlements, toxic chemicals, and health and the environment.

55. At its second regular session of 1994, ACC reiterated its commitment to supporting the Commission on Sustainable Development, in particular through IACSD and its task managers. In so doing, ACC agreed with IACSD on the need to move from the present emphasis on reporting to a more operational and action-oriented phase in the response of the United Nations system to the implementation of Agenda 21. ACC also endorsed the conclusion of IACSD regarding the need to achieve a better balance between the environmental and development aspects of sustainable development in the work of the Commission and in the follow-up to UNCED in general.

56. ACC welcomed the analysis undertaken by IACSD of the policy implications for the United Nations system of the outcome of the second session of the

Commission on Sustainable Development. It encouraged all the organizations concerned to take the policy issues identified by IACSD fully into account in their work relating to Agenda 21.

57. ACC again shared the concern of IACSD that the increasingly heavy burden of reporting requirements emanating from the Commission and other intergovernmental bodies risked diverting the resources of secretariats from substantive work relating to the implementation of Agenda 21, and directed IACSD to expedite its consideration of proposals for streamlining such reporting.

58. ACC endorsed the recommendation of IACSD that its membership be open to all interested organizations of the United Nations system. It also welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and noted that their implementation would have significant implications for the system as a whole.

G. Follow-up to the World Conference on Human Rights

59. At its first regular session of 1994, ACC considered the implications for the system of the outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna in June 1993.

60. ACC members reaffirmed their commitment to contributing actively to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the Conference, within the framework of the mandates, resources and approved programmes of their respective organizations. This will be done by, inter alia:

(a) Assessing the impact of the strategies and policies of their organizations on the enjoyment of all human rights;

(b) Considering the feasibility of developing common indicators and guidelines for that purpose;

(c) Addressing periodically ways of furthering a coordinated approach by the United Nations system to the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the most vulnerable in society, and to the incorporation of human rights concerns into strategies and programmes;

(d) Strengthening, making better use of and, where necessary, expanding existing consultative arrangements to provide a framework for the follow-up to the Conference that would facilitate priority-setting, exchanges of experience and coordination of ongoing activities within the United Nations system and with appropriate non-governmental organizations;

(e) Strengthening training programmes in human rights for international civil servants, especially those working in the fields of development, technical assistance, peacemaking and peace-building;

(f) Examining ways of facilitating a more systematic exchange of, and access to, relevant information within the system by, for example, establishing compatible databases;

(g) Supporting and cooperating with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in his system-wide coordination responsibilities.

IV. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

61. ACC, through its Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), continued to review progress achieved in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations system, as well as of the relevant provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/33 on the operational activities segment of the Council and decision 1994/293 on the high-level meeting of the 1995 operational activities segment of the Council.

A. Triennial policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations system

62. At its fourth session, CCPOQ reviewed arrangements for the preparation of the 1995 comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations system. Committee members undertook to participate fully in all phases of the process, including the preparation of survey instruments, the conducting of field visits and the review of data and policy options. Final responsibility for the preparation of the report will rest, as in the past, with the Secretary-General.

63. Pending completion of the 1995 triennial policy review report, information on a number of sub-themes of operational activities is provided below.

Country strategy note

64. During 1994, interest on the part of Governments in the preparation of country strategy notes increased. This was reflected in the growing number of countries that, during the second part of 1994, confirmed their intention to launch a country strategy note process: some 68 to date. By the end of the year, one country had finished and officially adopted a note and 13 countries had produced final drafts. Another group of 25 countries was expected to finalize a first draft during the first half of 1995.

65. It is envisaged that a sufficient number of country strategy notes will be finalized during 1995 to allow a first, reliable assessment of their value as an instrument of coordination. As noted above, strong interest has been expressed by ACC in achieving greater complementarity between the country strategy notes and the policy framework papers prepared under the aegis of the Bretton Woods institutions.

Evaluation of the programme approach

66. CCPOQ noted that variations existed in operationalizing the programme approach, which implied that there was a need for different methods of monitoring and evaluation. The Committee invited the Inter-agency Working Group

on Evaluation to consider this issue in its review of guiding principles of a monitoring and evaluation methodology. The Group, at its meeting in December 1994, finalized guidelines on the subject for consideration by CCPOQ at its fifth session, in January/February 1995.

Training in operational activities

67. The programme of training in operational activities, involving both national officials and United Nations system staff, continued satisfactorily with the conducting of field coordination workshops for United Nations system representatives, follow-up workshops at the country level, capacity-building programmes in project formulation and management workshops for training "trainers". New terms of reference have been approved for the Advisory Panel on Training, which should lead to greater cooperation in this area within the system.

B. Resident coordinator system

68. CCPOQ continued its work aimed at strengthening the resident coordinator system and developing a consolidated statement on the role and functions of resident coordinators. Work on the updating of the terms of reference of resident coordinators and related elements, arising from General Assembly resolution 47/199, was carried out by a Working Group that met in December 1994. The results are to be reviewed by CCPOQ at its fifth session.

69. CCPOQ gave extensive consideration to the annual reports of the resident coordinators. It suggested that such reports should be focused in the future on selected themes and considered that greater emphasis should be placed on their collegial preparation under the responsibility of the resident coordinator. It was generally felt that greater use should be made of these reports by the United Nations development system and a more substantive response given to them.

70. With regard to resource requirements, both human and financial, of the resident coordinator system, the Committee noted that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was currently reviewing the costs of the exercise of the resident coordinator function by its resident representatives. It was agreed that innovative ways to finance the resident coordinator system should be developed and brought to the attention of ACC.

V. ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES INVOKING ARTICLE 50 OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

71. In paragraph 65 of the report on the first part of its thirty-fourth session (A/49/16 (Part I)), CPC "stressed the importance of continuing the efforts of the Secretary-General, including in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, in mobilizing and coordinating assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter and requested him to continue those efforts and report on the outcome thereof in the next overview report of ACC". The countries referred to are those affected by the sanctions introduced by the Security Council against Iraq and the former Yugoslavia.

72. The background and substantive issues involved were described in the report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to the note by the President of the Security Council regarding the question of the special economic problems of States as a result of sanctions imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations (A/48/573-S/26705).

73. The efforts made by the United Nations system to provide assistance to the 21 affected States that had invoked Article 50 of the Charter in connection with the implementation of Security Council resolution 661 (1990) on sanctions against Iraq were first dealt with in the annual overview report of ACC for 1992 (E/1993/47/Add.1). The comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the application of Article 50 (A/48/573-S/26705) also contained detailed information on the assistance activities undertaken in this regard by the international financial institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)), the regional development banks and UNDP. Subsequently, the annual overview report of ACC for 1993 stated that, although emergency operations and special assistance projects on behalf of the 21 affected countries had been largely completed, ongoing activities of the relevant components of the United Nations system, within their competence and available resources, continued to take into account the special economic problems of the affected countries (E/1994/19, para. 60).

74. In 1994, the adjustment efforts of the 21 affected States deepened. The ongoing activities of the United Nations system in those countries and in areas most seriously affected by the Gulf crisis and its long-term effects continued to be pursued during the course of the year.

75. The annual overview report of ACC for 1993 also outlined the measures taken by the Secretary-General, and the activities carried out by the United Nations system, under Article 50 of the Charter, in response to the special economic problems of eight States adversely affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) (E/1994/19, paras. 61-66). Detailed information on the response of the United Nations system, with particular reference to the relevant activities of the World Bank and IMF, regional development banks and UNDP, including their participation in regional initiatives and follow-up arrangements under the auspices of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, was also provided in the report of the Secretary-General on Economic Assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) (A/49/356).

76. By resolution 49/21 A of 2 December 1994, the General Assembly, inter alia, having taken note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/356), and in particular the conclusions contained therein, recognized the urgent need for a concerted response from the international community to deal in a more effective manner with the special economic problems of the affected States in view of their magnitude and the adverse impact of the sanctions on those States; invited the international financial institutions to continue to pay special attention to the economic problems of the affected States arising from the implementation of the sanctions and the adverse social impact and to consider, inter alia (a) how the existing facilities of IMF might be helpful to the States concerned, with a

view to alleviating their special economic problems and (b) how consultative group meetings of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development on the countries in question, scheduled for 1995, might further help to mobilize additional resources to mitigate the losses and costs incurred by those countries; requested the competent organs, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to take into consideration, in programming their development activities, the special needs of the affected States and to consider providing assistance to the affected States from their special programme resources; and requested the Secretary-General to continue to seek, on a regular basis, information from States and the concerned organs and agencies of the United Nations system on action taken to alleviate the special economic problems of the affected States and to report thereon to the Security Council, as well as to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the Assembly at its fiftieth session.

77. Pursuant to that resolution, the Secretary-General will submit to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session a further report containing information received from the relevant entities of the United Nations system.

78. In a related development, the General Assembly, in paragraph 3 of its resolution 49/58 of 9 December 1994, on the report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, invited the Secretary-General to submit, before the session of the Committee in 1995, a report on the question of the implementation of the provisions of the Charter, including Article 50, related to the special economic problems confronting States and arising from the carrying out of sanctions mandated under Chapter VII of the Charter, analysing the proposals and suggestions on this issue contained in the report of the Committee on its 1994 session (A/49/33), giving due attention to possible practical ways and means of carrying any of them out. In paragraph 4 (a) (i) of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Special Committee, at its session in 1995, to continue to consider on a priority basis proposals on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter, including the working paper submitted in this regard to the Special Committee during its last session (A/AC.182/L.79).

79. Most recently, in the document entitled "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: position paper of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations" (A/50/60-S/1995/1), in the context of instruments for peace and security "where unforeseen, or only partly foreseen, difficulties have arisen and where there is a need for the Member States to take the 'hard decisions'", the Secretary-General highlighted key issues in the area of sanctions. In paragraph 73 of the document, the Secretary-General stated:

> "there is an urgent need for action to respond to the expectations raised by Article 50 of the Charter. Sanctions are a measure taken collectively by the United Nations to maintain or restore international peace and security. The costs involved in their application, like other such costs (e.g. for peacemaking and peace-keeping activities), should be borne equitably by all Member States and not exclusively by the few who have the

misfortune to be neighbours or major economic partners of the target country".

80. In order to address the problems in the area of sanctions, the Secretary-General suggested the establishment of a mechanism to carry out the following five functions:

(a) To assess, at the request of the Security Council, and before sanctions are imposed, their potential impact on the target country and on third countries;

(b) To monitor application of the sanctions;

(c) To measure their effects in order to enable the Security Council to fine-tune them with a view to maximizing their political impact and minimizing collateral damage;

(d) To ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups;

(e) To explore ways of assisting Member States that are suffering collateral damage and to evaluate claims submitted by such States under Article 50.

81. While, in view of its purpose of assisting the Security Council, this mechanism would have to be located in the United Nations Secretariat, it should be empowered to utilize the expertise available throughout the United Nations system, in particular that of the Bretton Woods institutions. To this end, Member States will have to give the proposal their political support both at the United Nations and in the intergovernmental bodies of the agencies concerned if it is to be implemented effectively.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS

A. Personnel issues

Performance management

82. ACC, at its second regular session of 1994, reviewed proposals submitted by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) for the development of a strategy to improve managerial effectiveness and accountability within the system at all levels, through objective performance appraisal systems, appropriate rewards and sanctions and effective training programmes.

83. ACC endorsed CCAQ's initiative in developing a prototype appraisal report form, based on performance objectives and individual competencies, and accompanying guidelines, and encouraged those organizations that had not yet done so to introduce more rigorous performance appraisals for all levels of staff. Progress to this end will be reviewed in 1995.

Study of the application of the Noblemaire principle

84. At both its first and second regular sessions of 1994, ACC expressed concern at the continued lack of competitiveness of the conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories of staff of the organizations of the United Nations system. ACC appreciated and welcomed the decision of the General Assembly, in resolution 47/216, to request the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to study all aspects of the application of the Noblemaire principle with a view to ensuring the competitiveness of the United Nations common system, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

85. ACC regretted that the ICSC response to that request had been confined to a number of technical adjustments of a minor nature and considered that such a limited and fragmented approach did not respond to the letter and spirit of the Assembly's request.

86. Recalling that a reappraisal of the 1921 principle, on which common system remuneration is based, was long overdue, ACC reiterated its concern that the current remuneration system was outdated and needed to be overhauled to become competitive with bilateral and other multilateral financial and aid agencies. This was, in the view of ACC, particularly important at a time when new demands, involving increasingly diverse and complex programmes, were being placed on the system.

87. ACC emphasized that its basic concern was to achieve a significant updating of the application of the Noblemaire principle that would reflect, inter alia, the internationalization of the labour force. The remuneration levels offered by other international employers, such as the Bretton Woods institutions and some other regional intergovernmental organizations, were known to be more competitive than those of the common system.

88. ACC noted that ICSC had been provided with a comparative analysis of the structure and programmes of work of three groups of international organizations and those of the United Nations common system and with a historical analysis of the compensation policies of the United Nations. Those analyses, inter alia, had led to a number of conclusions: that the consistent thread of pay policy was the need to attract and retain staff of a high level of competence; that there was nothing to prevent a re-determination of the manner in which the Noblemaire principle was currently applied in the framework of the United Nations common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of service; and that there were significant similarities between the activities of the United Nations and those of the three international civil services (the World Bank, the coordinated organizations and the European Union) which competed with the United Nations for staff.

89. ACC considered that ICSC's inaction in responding to requests of the Assembly and the executive heads of the common system could not be justified on the grounds of lack of information or technical support from organizations, which had been thorough and extensive. ACC therefore strongly urged ICSC to finalize the studies mandated by the General Assembly in resolution 47/216 and to submit them to ACC for consideration at its first regular session of 1995.

Safety and security of United Nations staff and associated personnel

90. ACC discussed extensively issues related to the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel. ACC members, for whom the security and safety of staff was a matter of paramount importance, expressed appreciation for the work of the office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and had an extensive discussion on strengthening measures to protect the lives of United Nations staff operating in dangerous locations and on policies governing staff evacuation.

91. ACC welcomed the initiative of the General Assembly to conclude a convention on security and safety of United Nations staff and associated personnel. ACC expressed deep concern, however, that the current wording of those articles of the revised negotiating text of the draft convention covering the scope of application and definitions would exclude from the purview of the proposed convention most regular or emergency activities of United Nations programmes and specialized agencies that did not constitute a part of a peace-keeping operation, even though such activities were usually carried out in parallel with peace-keeping operations. ACC also pointed out that there were numerous situations in which the activities of the United Nations system, including emergency relief operations, were not being carried out under Security Council mandates in conjunction with a peace-keeping operation. Moreover, in many cases emergency relief or other United Nations activities started well before the Security Council addressed the situation in certain countries and mandated peace-keeping operations.

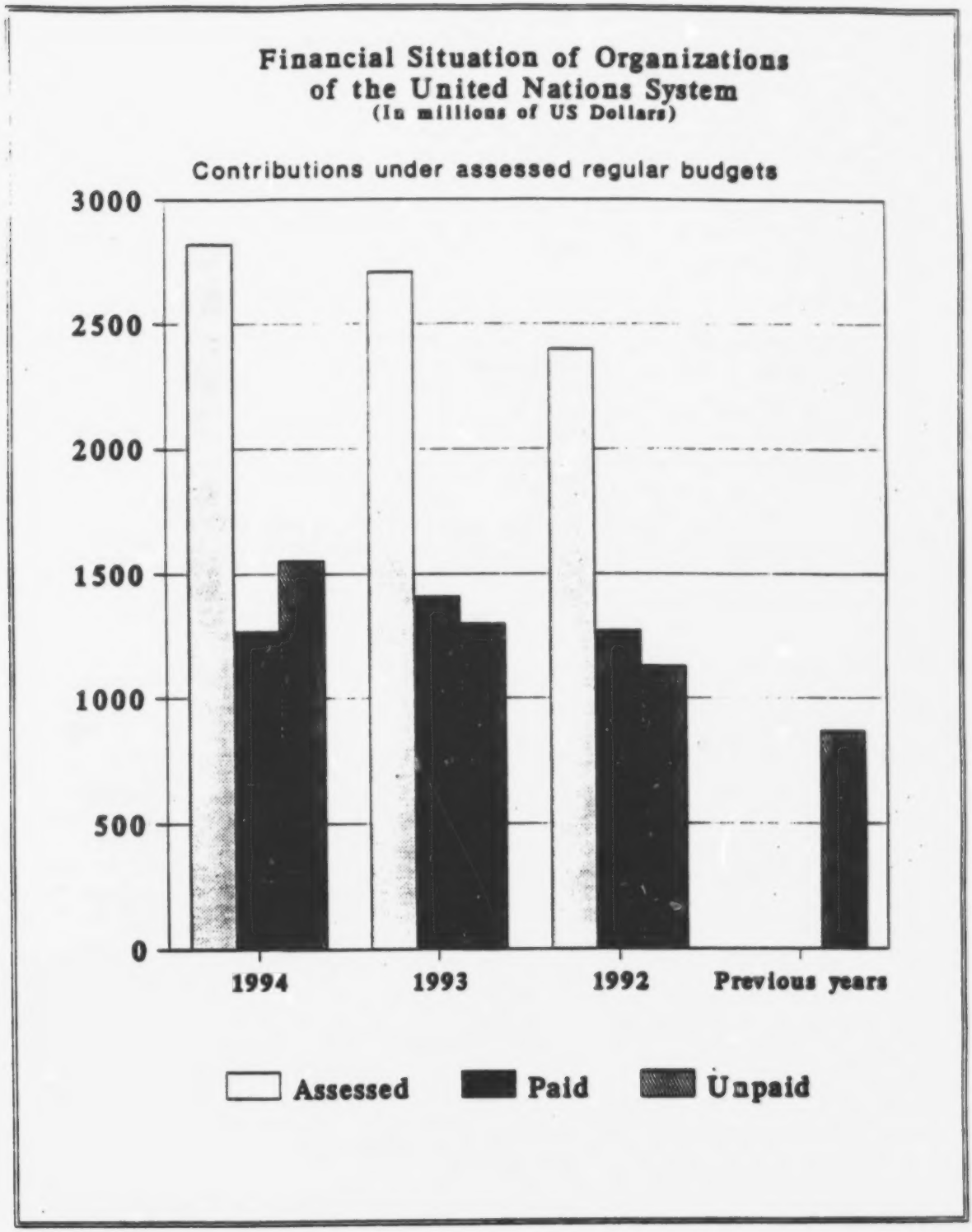
92. Noting that the majority of staff in the field were carrying out activities mandated by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council or the governing organs of United Nations programmes, funds or specialized agencies that were an integral part of the overall objectives of the United Nations system, ACC pointed out that the work of such personnel was often no less dangerous than the work of those involved in peace-keeping operations.

93. Stressing the importance of protecting the hundreds of dedicated staff members who put their lives at risk in the service of the United Nations system, ACC expressed the view that all staff members serving with the organizations of the United Nations system should be covered under the convention.

B. Financial issues

Financial situation of organizations of the United Nations system

94. ACC continued to review the financial situation of organizations of the system in 1994. Statistics collected under the auspices of ACC (see the figure) indicated that at 30 June 1994, some $1,552 million or over 55 per cent of total contributions due for the year under assessed regular budgets had not been paid, although the financial regulations of organizations with assessed budgets generally provided that contributions were due and payable on 1 January of the year to which they related. Unpaid contributions at the same date in 1993 amounted to almost $1,300 million (48 per cent of total assessments for 1993) and in 1992, to $1,128 million (47 per cent of total assessments for 1992).


Financial Situation of Organizations
of the United Nations System
(In millions of US Dollars)
Contributions under assessed regular budgets
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
1994
1993
1992
Previous years
Assessed
Paid
Unpaid

Cumulative arrears of assessed regular budget contributions for prior years amounted to some $867 million, or about 31 per cent of assessed contributions for 1994 at the same date. While many major contributors scrupulously fulfilled their financial obligations, a considerable portion of outstanding contributions for both current and prior years was attributable to the non-payment by some major contributors. In this context, the annual review by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) (CCAQ (FB)) of the functioning of the existing incentive and penalty schemes, designed to accelerate the payment of assessed contributions, confirmed previous conclusions that while penalty schemes remained generally effective, the usefulness of incentive schemes in obtaining the objective appeared doubtful.

95. For the United Nations, the general financial situation remained precarious, particularly with regard to the receipt of assessed contributions for peace-keeping activities. Organizations with technical cooperation programmes continued to suffer as a result of the stagnation in voluntary contributions to UNDP and the increase in the national execution modality.

Harmonization of financial statements

96. In the context of the continuing evolution of the common accounting standards published in 1993, ACC began work in 1994 on standards for the harmonization of financial statements. Two meetings of senior accounting specialists from organizations of the system were convened and monitored by CCAQ (FB) and an informal meeting was held with the Technical Group of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations to discuss the progress of the work. These meetings resulted in the production of a first draft of the standards, which are expected to be finalized by the end of 1995.

Statistical reports

97. In accordance with General Assembly decision 47/449 of 22 December 1992, ACC submitted to the Assembly, at its forty-ninth session, the third report on the budgetary and financial situation of organizations of the United Nations system (A/49/588), containing system-wide information on regular budgets and assessed contributions, working capital funds and expenditure and receipt of voluntary contributions. Taking account of comments made during the discussion on the second report (A/47/746), additional detailed data concerning assessed and voluntary contributions by States were included to replace data which had, in the past, been provided to the Committee on Contributions.

Other financial issues

98. In the course of its work on budgetary, financial and related questions in 1994, ACC also, inter alia:

(a) Carried out a comprehensive review of the cost-sharing arrangements for jointly financed activities, particularly with regard to those where the volume of activity of participating organizations appeared to be the most relevant consideration;

(b) Assembled and reviewed extensive data on the cost of organizations' health insurance schemes, including additional data on cost-containment measures and the potential liability of organizations for health insurance for retirees, in the context of a continuing review of the control of such costs;

(c) Continued confidential interorganizational discussions on means of prevention and detection of fraud;

(d) Continued to keep under review arrangements with the Commission of the European Communities concerning administrative and financial conditions for humanitarian and operational activities financed by the Commission and implemented by organizations of the United Nations system.

VII. ELEMENTS OF THE ACC PROGRAMME IN 1995

99. During 1995, ACC will continue its consideration of policy issues relating to the division of labour within the United Nations system and the strengthening of cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and other organizations of the system. It will also follow up on the discussions held in 1994, in ACC and at the twenty-eighth series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC, which was devoted to African economic recovery and development.

100. The implications of the World Summit for Social Development for the work of the system will undoubtedly figure prominently on the ACC agenda. Other programme areas which are expected to receive focused attention by ACC in 1995 include population and development, in the wake of the International Conference on Population and Development, and drug abuse control.

101. As part of its continuing consideration of key management issues facing the system and in connection with the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, ACC is expected to give special consideration, during the first half of the year, to issues relating to the status of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system.

102. As a contribution to the process of debate and reflection on the response of the United Nations system to the new challenges facing it, which is taking place during the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, a forum on the future of the system is to be held in Vienna in conjunction with the first regular session of 1995 of ACC.

103. As in the past, the programme of work of ACC and its subsidiary machinery will be adjusted and geared to providing inter-agency support to the appropriate intergovernmental bodies in their consideration of issues of system-wide concern, particularly the issues to be selected by the Economic and Social Council for its high-level, coordination and operational activities segments.

104. In line with the objectives that have guided the recent restructuring of the intersecretariat coordination machinery, members of ACC, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, will pursue further measures to strengthen the contribution of ACC to enhancing the coherence and impact of the work of the system. As part of this effort, it is intended to make greater use

of small task forces at the executive-head level, focusing on critical development issues, and to develop joint programmes based on common policies for implementation at the country level.